

Electoral Board and General Registrar

15-01-Election Administration

Fund/Agency: 001/15	Electoral Board and General Registrar	
Personnel Services	\$848,717	CAPS Percentage of Agency Total 33.4% 66.6% ■ Election Administration ■ All Other Agency CAPS
Operating Expenses	\$175,031	
Recovered Costs	\$0	
Capital Equipment	\$1,002,000	
Total CAPS Cost:	\$2,025,748	
Federal Revenue	\$0	
State Revenue	\$16,211	
User Fee Revenue	\$5,260	
Other Revenue	\$0	
Total Revenue:	\$21,471	
Net CAPS Cost:	\$2,004,277	
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this CAPS	9/9	

► CAPS Summary

The Election Administration division of the Office of the Electoral Board and General Registrar is responsible for the logistics of conducting elections including providing the voting equipment, ballots, materials, polling places, officers of election and training to conduct all Federal, State, town and local elections in Fairfax County. This division is also responsible for receiving, cataloging and reviewing candidate's Statement of Organization and Campaign Contribution and Expenditure reports.

Due to the cyclical nature of our responsibilities, the Electoral Board has a very small full time staff. We rely on a virtual army of limited term employees to assist with all aspects of election preparation from packing supplies and setting up the voting machines to contacting and training officers of election. Limited term employees staff the absentee voting satellites and assist with processing and mailing absentee ballots. We also use over 2,200 citizens to operate the polling places on Election Day.

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Since any change affecting voting is subject to preclearance by the United States Department of Justice under the Voting Rights Act, the Electoral Board staff works closely with the County Attorney's Office to ensure compliance with all federal, state and local laws. The Electoral Board also coordinates efforts with many other County agencies during the course of the year to fulfill election requirements. These agencies include Circuit Court, DIT, GIS, Public Affairs, Libraries, Police, Print Shop, Mail Services, Purchasing, Department of Management and Budget, Finance, Facilities Management, Parks and Public Schools.

Voting equipment: As mandated by Code of Virginia Section 24.2-627, the Electoral Board must provide one voting machine for every 750 voters in a precinct. Even before the events in Florida, the Electoral Board was seeking to purchase new electronic voting machines. Although our Electronic-1242 machines are extremely reliable and well-liked by the voters, they are getting old and becoming quite expensive to maintain, store and transport. The DOS-based software is fifteen years old – quite ancient by today's technology standards. The manufacturer no longer supports the old software and no longer carries parts for the impact printers in our oldest machines. Storage space in the warehouse is also at a premium and other agencies are impacted by the large area required to store and service these machines.

The Agency has been examining new equipment from several vendors who are going through the state certification process. The new touch-screen type machines are smaller, requiring less warehouse storage space and less cost to transport. The testing, set-up and annual maintenance will require significantly less time. New machines will have the capability of transmitting results electronically with virtually simultaneous display on the Internet. In addition, Federal legislation is now pending that will require all precincts to have voting equipment that allows visually impaired voters to cast their ballots without assistance. All of the new machines that are under consideration will be able to meet that standard.

Funding is now in place to begin a five-year machine replacement program beginning in FY 2002. After the state certification process is completed later this year, the Agency will begin the process of selecting a vendor, testing the equipment and making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Voting Machine Ballots and Memory Cartridges: The design of voting machine ballots is prescribed by the State Board of Elections and is coordinated with other jurisdictions using similar machines. Individual ballot faces must be produced for each of the voting machines, a process that usually takes 2 weeks. Memory cartridges must also be programmed and tested for each individual machine. Programming cartridges for 825 machines is a process that takes approximately 10-12 hours. Thirty days following the election the memory cartridges must be opened, electronically erased and have fuses replaced before they can be used for the next election, a process that takes several days. Newer technology will simplify this process significantly.

Paper Ballots and Absentee Voting: Paper ballots for absentee voting must be approved and printed in a manner prescribed by the State Board of Elections. The Electoral Board must have the ballots available for mail and in-person voting 45 days before a general election and 30 days prior to a primary or special election. Optical-scan equipment (AccuVote) is used to read and tally these ballots at the absentee voting satellites and in the Central Absentee Precinct on Election Day. These machines also require the same rigorous maintenance, programming and testing as the Electronic-1242 machines. Paper ballots must also be printed for use in the precincts for curbside voters and in emergency situations.

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All paper ballots must be strictly secured and accounted for both before, during and after each election. Each election also requires different numbers and types of ballots. For example, in November 2001, this agency will need 17 different ballot styles to conduct elections for the 17 Delegate Districts within the County. In 2002, 3 ballot styles will be sufficient for the three Congressional districts. In 2003, the Electoral Board will need over 70 different ballot styles for the various combinations of Senate, Delegate and Supervisor Districts.

As a service to voters, the Electoral Board provides 8 absentee voting satellites at various locations around the County for 2½ weeks prior to each November election. These satellites also require secure facilities, voting machines, ballots, forms, phone lines, signage, supplies, staffing, and staff training.

Materials: The Electoral Board must design, produce and/or secure a multitude of forms, signs, instructions and supplies to conduct each election – everything from legal documents such as the Statement of Results and Abstracts of Election to items such as signs, rulers and pens. Although the State Board of Elections prescribes the format for many of the legal forms, our staff has customized these forms to merge with the precinct and candidate databases for greater efficiency. Due to recent funding cuts on the state level, many of the forms and envelopes that were previously provided by the state will have to be printed by the localities.

Precincts and Polling Places: The Electoral Board makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for changes in precinct boundaries and polling places based on election districts, population growth, suitability of facilities and communities of interest. This year, the decennial reapportionment process for all federal, state and local election districts resulted in the creation of 15 new precincts. Staff must identify potential polling places and ensure that buildings meet all federal and state accessibility standards. An annual accessibility survey is now mandated by the State Board of Elections. Following approval of a new polling location, staff must coordinate use of the facility, delivery of machines and payment of any fees involved.

Officers of Election: Over 2,200 citizens are required to staff the 217 polling places and count absentee ballots on Election Day. In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find reliable, competent citizens to fill these positions. In an effort to reduce “no-shows,” the election officer coordinators have resorted to using seasonal personnel to contact every election officer by phone. Our coordinators are also looking for more creative ways to recruit new election officers, including producing Public Service Announcements, developing partnerships with businesses and non-profit groups and seeking legislation to allow government workers a day of leave to work at the polls. As new equipment is implemented and the conduct of elections becomes more “high-tech,” the Electoral Board will be seeking younger, computer-literate citizens to serve as officers of election.

Election Officer Training: Training 450 Chief and Assistant Chief officers and over 900 new officers in the short period of time allowed before Election Day presents an enormous challenge for the staff. This past year we redesigned many of our forms and created a new easy-to-read manual/checklist for the chief officers. We also created instruction materials with sample forms for new recruits and review sheets that were mailed to the returning officers. For the future, we will be working with Channel 16 to create training videos to provide more consistent instruction and to reduce the number of staff members required to teach each class.

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Campaign Finance Reports: The new state mandate requires the Agency to “receive, catalog and review” campaign contribution and expenditure reports (Section 24.2-928.) The Agency also now has the authority to impose and collect fines for violations of campaign reporting requirements (Section 24.2-929 and 930.) In past years our office was only responsible for receiving these campaign reports, making them available for public inspection under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and notifying the Commonwealth’s Attorney if reports were late.

Under new State Board of Election guidelines, the review process now involves checking balances, verifying aggregate totals for contributors, verifying beginning and ending balances with previous reports, and checking the final disposition of loan balances and transfers of funds to new campaigns. The audit and tracking of these reports and violations will be a huge undertaking. A new database is being developed for this purpose. The first report that was audited took an experienced staff member approximately 4 hours to review and turned up a number of discrepancies that need to be addressed. In an election year, up to eight reports are filed for approximately 150 campaigns. In a non-election year, two reports are required for each open campaign. The staff is also developing plans to make these reports available on the Agency web site. This will reduce the staff time and expense of making and selling paper copies and will certainly be a convenience for the citizens and reporters who wish to view these reports.

► **Method of Service Provision**

Normal services are provided in the Electoral Board Office in the Government Center. Regular office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. The Code of Virginia mandates that the office be open for absentee voting a minimum of 8 hours the two Saturdays before a general election and one Saturday before each primary or special election. The office is required to be open until 5:00 p.m. on days when candidate filings and reports are due.

As a service to voters, office hours for absentee voting are extended to 7:30 p.m. (8:00 p.m. in presidential years) for 2½ weeks before each November election. Eight absentee satellite offices, located in the governmental centers, are also staffed for 2½ weeks before the November election. Satellite hours are 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. weekdays (3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in presidential years) and 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

On Election Days the Electoral Board office is open at 5:00 a.m. and remains open until all absentee ballots are counted and all precincts have reported in – often after midnight. The Electoral Board provides 217 polling places staffed with 2,200+ officers of election at over 200 locations for each November general election. Polling places are located in public schools, libraries, churches, community centers and other public buildings.

Training for new officers of election and all Chief and Assistant Chief officers is mandated by Code for each election. The Electoral Board staff conducts both day and evening classes at various times and locations before each election. Last October, the Electoral Board staff instructed 25 Rovers, 425 Chief and Assistant Chief officers and over 900 new officers of election to conduct the 2000 presidential election.

Voting machines are stored, tested and maintained at the county warehouse facility in Springfield. Electoral Board staff services the 825 voting machines over a 2-3 week period each summer. Machines are tested and set-up approximately 6 weeks before each November election over a period of 2-3 weeks. Preparation for primary and special elections requires approximately 1 week, depending upon the number of machines needed for the election.

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► Performance/Workload Related Data

Title	FY 1998 Actual	FY 1999 Actual	FY 2000 Actual	FY 2001 Estimate	FY 2002 Estimate
Registered Voters	516,016	531,456	537,096	583,717	577,000
Precincts/Polling Places	203	203	203	217	220
Voting Machines	720	755	775	810	825
Officers of Election	1,588	1,605	1,527	2,227	1,800

Voter registration increases dramatically in presidential election years. Voter rolls are purged of inactive registrants who have not voted in two consecutive Federal elections which causes a decrease in registration.

The Electoral Board is required to provide one voting machine for each 750 registered voters in a precinct. (Code of Virginia Section 24.2-627) with a minimum of two machines per precinct.

There was a freeze on creating new precincts for the 2 years prior to the census redistricting. (Code of Virginia Section 24.2-309.1)

Extra election officers are assigned to precincts for presidential elections because of higher voter turnout.

► Mandate Information

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 76 - 100%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- The U.S. Constitution, the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act relating to public services, the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act, Article II of the Virginia Constitution, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and Title 24.2, Virginia Election Laws, Code of Virginia.

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► User Fee Information

Subobject Code	Fee Title	FY 2002 ABP Fee Total
0531	Fine for violation of Campaign Finance Reporting	N/A
Current Fee		Maximum Allowable Fee Amount
Varies with nature of violation – schedule set by <u>Code of Virginia</u> .		Varies with violation: \$50-500
Purpose of Fee: Imposes penalties for failure to file, late filing or incomplete reports of candidate's campaign contributions and expenditures.		
Levy Authority	Requirements to Change the Fee	Year Fee Was Last Adjusted
<u>Code of Virginia</u> §24.2-928, 929 & 930	Action of Virginia General Assembly	New fee July 1, 2001
Other Remarks: This is a new responsibility for the local electoral boards effective July 1, 2001. Previous fines were paid to the Treasurer of Virginia.		

Subobject Code	Fee Title	FY 2002 ABP Fee Total
0604	Copying Fees	\$4,110
Current Fee		Maximum Allowable Fee Amount
10¢ per page		N/A
Purpose of Fee: Recover cost of copying documents available under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act.		
Levy Authority	Requirements to Change the Fee	Year Fee Was Last Adjusted
Set by Agency	Agency discretion.	Unknown
Other Remarks: Fee is primarily used for copying candidate campaign contribution and expenditure reports. Future plans are to put these reports on the Agency web site, which will reduce the demand for copies, but will also reduce the staff time needed to make the copies.		

Subobject Code	Fee Title	FY 2002 ABP Fee Total
0608	Sales of Locators	\$1,150
Current Fee		Maximum Allowable Fee Amount
\$30 per volume		N/A
Purpose of Fee: Recover cost of printing Street Locators		
Levy Authority	Requirements to Change the Fee	Year Fee Was Last Adjusted
Set by Agency	Agency discretion.	FY 2000
Other Remarks: Future plans are to offer the street locator on a CD or online to reduce the cost to the user and to reduce the volume of printed material.		